THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE-PATIL): (a) The reference to deflation in the RBI Report on Currency and Finance is with respect to price movements in Japan.

(b) Does not arise.

Restoration of Import Duty on Soda Ash

569. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of representations have been received from Gujarat for restoration of import duty on soda ash to its original level in the interest of people of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to restore the duty on soda ash to its original level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has received representations on behalf of the domestic soda ash manufacturers for restoration or increase of duty on soda ash.

(c) The Government has decided to retain the duty at the rate of 20 per cent on soda ash taking into account factors such as the domestic demand-supply position, comparative prices of indigenous and imported soda ash and status and composition of the domestic manufacturing and user industries.

Annual Target for DRI

570. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government and RBI have set annual target for all the Public Sector Banks in respect of Differential Rates of Interest (DRI) for the Weaker Sections of Society;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that none of the banks has achieved their target for the last many years;